

484 afternoon. This is the height of luxury in travel in North Western China. Riding good ambling ponies we used to average four miles or more per hour on a good trail, and a day's journey of 80 li seemed nothing under these conditions. But a few really tiring marches (and this is one of them) stand out in my memory, when we had to cover a hundred li or more over rocky mountain paths where it might be necessary to walk half of the way; the hardest day of all was a march on the Kokonor border, when we started at 6 a.m. and got in at 9 p.m., crossing a pass over 13,000 feet high on the way.

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133 Leaving Ch'iyi Chen the track runs down the valley towards the Yellow River for a few li and then strikes straight up the mountain side to the south to reach the pass (3600 feet). This ridge is the boundary between the districts of Yich'uan and Hanch'eng, which are both very extended ones. From the pass there is a steep drop into a gorge and then a climb over a loess spur to reach the hamlet of T'uch'uan lying in a narrow ravine. From here the trail strikes again up the mountain side to the south, crosses a pass (4100 feet), and descends along a loess ridge with finally a steep drop to reach the walled village of Wangfeng Ch'iao lying in the narrow valley of a stream flowing east. From Ch'iyi Chen to Wangfeng Ch'iao is the middle stage in the three days' march between Yich'uan and Hanch'eng, and though only called 60 li in length is a tiring day's work, consisting of one long scramble up and down the mountains. As this route slants across the ridges to the S.E. and approaches the Yellow River, the passes decrease in altitude and some loess begins to reappear. The mountains in this neighbourhood appear to be full of iron ore.

173 From Wangfeng Ch'iao the track ascends the mountain side to the south to reach a pass (3400 feet) in the last range which bars the way to the plains. From the previous passes there were extensive views across the cañon of the Yellow River to the mountains of Shansi, but the river itself remained invisible; from this ridge it is seen for the first time, emerging from the mountains at the mouth of the gorge known as Yümen K'ou. This is a very celebrated spot amongst the Chinese, since their annals record that the Emperor Yu (2000 B.C.) here cut a channel through the

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mountains to drain off the great floods which at that time submerged the whole of North West China, thus bringing into existence the modern Yellow River and the fertile deposits of *Huang Tu* (the "yellow earth," which we call loess); perhaps an earthquake gave rise to this tradition.

From this last pass the track drops steeply into a gorge which is followed for an hour's march to the S.E., and then, crossing the spur which encloses the gorge on the south, drops down into the loess plains on the right bank of the Yellow River. From this point to Hanch'eng Hsien, a distance of 40 li, the trail runs across an undulating plain, which is not really a plain but the usual loess plateau, here of moderate thickness, sloping down from the mountains to the Yellow River, the latter flowing five to ten li away on one's left. This plain between the foot hills and the river is one of the most fertile and densely populated regions in the province, and is thickly dotted with farms, villages, temples, tombs, and pagodas. It is always so in North China, densely peopled fertile plains and barren empty mountains side by side. The largest of the many villages passed is Hsichuang, where there is a likin station to catch the trade coming down from the North by the route we had traversed; but its receipts must be small nowadays, for not only not on this road, but at no time during our tour of Northern Shensi, did we meet a single load of merchandise or a single traveller of the better class, so utterly has all trade and traffic in that region been destroyed by the brigands. Finally there is a short steep descent to reach the city of Hanch'eng, which lies surrounded by fields of indigo in a basin in the loess plateau formed by the valley of a stream flowing S.E.

Hanch'eng, a second class district city, is a large and wealthy town, at least it appeared to us to be so, coming from the poverty-stricken North. The district is one of the most fertile in the province, and is noted for its wheat, cotton, hemp, and indigo. The irrigated fields round the city produce three crops in one summer, maize being sown after a crop of wheat has been harvested, and indigo being then transplanted in early June into the same field, the indigo and the maize growing up together.

The most direct road from Hanch'eng to Hsian lies

THROUGH JADE GATE

36/133 with stealthy steps; moving, like some sluggish organism, till with soft, hungry lips it has seized its prey and absorbed it; and then, replete and satisfied, has lain down triumphant. The surrounding scene is of an unspeakably desolate character, reminding one of a landscape in the moon, only that instead of extinct craters, here are dead and forgotten cities, towns, and villages.

- 173 All sorts of legends are told about this region.¹ Pulungki is said to have been the original Eden of the human race; any amount of buried treasures lie concealed in caves underneath the soil; demons haunt the whole neighbourhood; a hole in the ground with steps leading down may mean a robber's den, or, on the other hand, it may be the entrance to some Arabian Night's grotto, piled with glittering stones!

Circumstantial stories of such discoveries were told us. Men, whose names were known, had dug into such a hoard, and by the flare of torches had actually seen the booty, but when they were just on the point of seizing it, a rush of wings had passed overhead, throwing the searchers violently to the earth, and filling them with such terror that to escape with their lives was all they could hope for. Bats? No, not bats, they were too far in for that; besides, the cave had never been opened within the memory of man! Again, one party of excavators entering the far recesses of another subterranean shaft, had seen, to their amazement, a faint glimmer of light. Drawing near they had found a tiny oil lamp burning—a mere speck of flame, but undoubtedly of human origin, as there was a wick, which wick was fed from some enormous vat of vegetable oil, the supply of which had been sufficient to keep the light going for centuries! And to convince us of the truth of these assertions, we were shown certain remarkable,

[Between Yümen and Tunhuang—Analyst]

JADE GATE TO TUNHWANG

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and obviously antique, vases dug up from the same locality, and which were worthy of a place in a museum. One can wander from end to end of these lonely, melancholy, derelict cities, where on stormy nights the howling winds make play, and the swirls of sand spin down the forgotten avenues like Dancing Dervishes; and nothing can be too weird or too fantastic for the imagination to devise after lingering, even only for a few hours, in such surroundings. / 73.

By day we were subject to the illusion of the desert mirage. Again and again our field-glasses assured us of the existence of a large lake ahead, whose shining waters were bordered by standing trees, but as we came nearer there was only the lion-coloured sand, and the long line of the horizon. 000

We reached the next inn at midnight, and received the following morning the gift of two small cabbages, three turnips, and a little vinegar from a very old woman, who having heard that three 'Preachers of Righteousness' had arrived during the night, was determined to be the first to give them a welcome.

We found her living alone in a miserable hovel. Nevertheless, the ruling desire of her whole being was to be well-pleasing to the gods by purity of actions, hence her ardent desire to meet us, and be taught by us 'the Way of Life.' Living by herself and having no near relatives left, a young man had been fetched in to listen to our words, so that when we were gone he might help her to remember the precious instructions. 000

There was something inexpressibly pathetic and moving in the way in which she drank deeply of the truth as it is in Jesus, memorising with the utmost reverence the brief prayer we taught her; and when, on the morning of our departure, we went at dawn to

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I eat -	wu tschilara
bread -	borzordeno
Buddha -	skopdyo renbodye
living Buddha -	Yerech'tuch' te
tea -	dya
teacup -	aira
sky -	tingere
temple -	larang
horse -	more
mule -	lossa
plough -	radschar fulin (Mongolian on Koko Nor; diasse, meaning "tool" in Chinese)
house -	ger
tent -	re (black tents; mongu bau /Chinese/ the Mongolian tents)
ride horseback -	moru h'ana
walk -	so wade
I came -	tschtre wu
I went -	tschisch tschewu

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The Tu ren of Wei ylan bu told me they were Mongols. In their own language they call themselves mongrolkerf, and while they call the other, actual Mongols of the region h'ara monggo, that is: black Mongolians, they speak of themselves as the "white" or "yellow" ones. Most of them are farmers today, like the Chinese who afterwards immigrated. Many of them are very proud and self-conscious and regard themselves as very special and much better and more aristocratic than the Chinese and Tibetans. Nor do they like the real Mongols. This is obvious from the epithet h'ara meaning "black" which they give them, for this is of course synonymous with "bad," while they themselves are the tsah'an, the white or good sheep. In Chinese they refer to themselves as "Tu ren." In a valley west of Wei ylan bu they told me: "We are Tu gu h'u ren' and we are the ones who came here first." It is true, I did not find many of those who called themselves Tu gu h'u ren (often also pronounced: Tu gu h'ung), probably 2,000 at the most, and they did not have their own prince but were directly subject to the hsien of Hsining and Niern be. They told me: "We carried on farming here when all the others were still wild and uncivilized." (2)

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Tu ren

quotes the Chinese chronicles as follows: T'ou kou hounn 563
 (or T'u gu hun) was the eldest son of "Chee koei," the khan 173
 of the Sien pi (Hsien be - Tungus?) but was the son of a
 concubine. His father gave him a horde, but the actual
 heritage went to the legitimate son, Mou joungh hoei. After
 the father's death (around 308 A.D.) the brothers quarreled
 because their horses had fought together. T'ou kou hounn
 left his home in present-day Manchuria, along with his horde
 and crossed the Liao River. At that time the Chinese Empire
 was split up into many small principalities and in what is
 now Shensi Huns ruled. T'ou kou hounn's horde pushed on
 farther and farther to the southwest until they found good
 pastures in the Koko Nor region. As time went on the T'ou
 kou hounn of the Koko Nor region were often mentioned by
 Chinese chronicles.

/248/ A few Tu ren teachers of Wei ylan bu maintained that 167
 their ancestors lived in the present-day province of Shansi in the 175
 North during the time of the Tang emperors (620-907). They said 563
 that their prince at that time had been Li ts'in wang (King Li) who
 had thirteen sons and assisted the Tang emperor when he was in great
 trouble, by defeating "Hoang ts'ao." They had always been free
 and it was only in the Ming period that they had come under Chinese
 domination. In the meantime a ruler with the title of Nan ding wang
 ruled them and he was supposed to have supported the emperor in his
 struggle against Tibetan invasions, that is to say, he was a sort of
 frontier guardsman for the Chinese. (1)

1. In various places within their empire the Chinese have
 allowed foreign peoples to remain. As we can clearly see
 in the Haining Valley, they always pushed into the neighbor-
 ing countries along the trade routes and did not disturb the
 former inhabitants in the mountains unless they were ener-
 getically aroused by them. Thus, the "wild Yao" have re-
 mained to this day in the mountains of South Hunan, and in
 southwest China the tribes of Miao tse, of independent Lolo,
 and others lived interspersed with Chinese. In the northwest
 near Haining the Chinese began pushing forward more than
 2,000 years ago, as we mentioned above, pp. 286 and 309.
 But they were checked by renewed disorders of the nomads
 after the Hsiung nu (the Huns) had conquered present-day